

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
TWO HUNDRED EIGHTH MEETING

National Great Rivers Museum
2 Lock and Dam Way
Alton, IL

May 3, 2011 9:00 a.m.

*Documentary Material Enclosed

Item 1: Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3:* Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes, February 8, 2011, and the 207th Meeting Minutes, February 9, 2011

Item 4: 2011 Meeting Schedule

September 20, 2011 – Lost Valley Visitor Center, Richmond

Item 5: INPC Staff Report

REPORT
Randy Heidorn
Nature Preserves Commission

Item 6: IDNR Staff Report

REPORT
Don McFall
IDNR, Office of Resource Conservation

Item 7: Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

REPORT
Anne Mankowski
Endangered Species Protection Board Manager

Item 8:* Monroe Co. – White Rock Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The proposed White Rock Land and Water Reserve is a 168.1-acre site in the Mississippi River bluff corridor of southwestern Illinois and is located within the Bluff Corridor/Karst Conservation Opportunity Area and the Northern Section of the Ozark Natural Division. Protection of this site supports several campaigns identified

in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP), including the Forests, Invasive Species, and Land and Water Stewardship campaigns. The site consists of two acres of grade B limestone glade intermingled with 166 acres of grade C mature second growth dry-mesic, mesic, and dry upland forest. The White Rock site encompasses approximately 50 acres of the Potato Hill Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (#0200). The site contains populations of the state-threatened Missouri coneflower (*Rudbeckia missouriensis*), and the state-endangered woolly buckthorn (*Bumelia lanuginosa*). This site was previously registered in 2005 by Columbia Quarry Company as the term-limited Columbia Quarry-White Rock Land and Water Reserve. In December 2010, two southwestern Illinois conservation organizations purchased the site, with funding from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Grand Victoria Foundation, and the State Wildlife Grant program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The site is now jointly owned by these two groups, Clifftop NFP (Conserving Lands in Farm, Forest, Talus or Prairie, Not For Profit), and Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.

REPORT

Debbie Newman

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Registration Approval

Item 9:* Cook Co. – Addition to Gensburg-Markham Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) seeks preliminary approval for dedication of two lots (approximately 0.96 acres) as an addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed addition lies just south of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve. Both Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Markham and lies within the boundaries of the INAI site (#400) and the registry of National Natural Landmarks designated by the U.S. National Park Service. Elements of grade A mesic sand prairie occur within the proposed addition and provides suitable habitat for expansion of a federally listed plant species located nearby. Dedication of this addition is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Master Plan for this site, tenets of good preserve design, the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan, and elements of the IWAP; specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality prairie communities. Dedication of the proposed addition acres will increase the size of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve from 200.316 to 201.276 acres and consolidates the long-standing land protection efforts in the area south of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve between 157th Street and 159th Street.

REPORT

Steven Byers

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 10:* Cook Co. – Markham Prairie – East Nature Preserve, Dedication

TNC seeks preliminary approval for dedication of Markham Prairie – East (consisting of 121 lots totaling 32.2 acres) as an Illinois nature preserve. Platted, but unbuilt roads and nine privately-owned lots are not included in the proposal. Markham Prairie – East is one of five prairies collectively referred to as the Indian Boundary Prairies located in southern Cook County in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. The other prairies include Gensburg-Markham Prairie, Sundrop Prairie, Paintbrush Prairie, and Dropseed Prairie. Of the 508.1 acres of the Indian Boundary Prairies that have been included on the INAI, 385.76 acres have been dedicated as part of the Illinois Nature Preserves system. The proposed nature preserve encompasses much, but not all, of the Markham Prairie – East INAI site (INAI #424). The INAI recognized the site for grade A and B mesic prairie and grade B sedge meadow. Staff of TNC now recognizes these communities as grade C mesic prairie and grade B/C wet prairie (as opposed to grade B sedge meadow) and attribute the decline in quality to intrusions to the site and until recently lack of management. Dedication of this site is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Site Design Plan prepared for the Indian Boundary Prairies by TNC and will protect mesic prairie and wet prairie/sedge meadow that are considered conservation priorities by the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan. TNC is committed to renewed efforts to manage the site. Dedication of Markham Prairie – East also supports elements of the IWAP; specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality prairie communities.

REPORT

Steven Byers

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 11:* Monroe Co. – White Rock Nature Preserve, Dedication

The proposed White Rock Nature Preserve is a 306.5-acre site in the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River floodplain within the Northern Section of the Ozark Natural Division. It is also located within the Bluff Corridor/Karst COA and supports several campaigns identified in the IWAP, including the Forests, Invasive Species, and Land and Water Stewardship campaigns. The site consists of five acres of grade A loess hill prairie, and two acres of grade B limestone glade intermingled with 299 acres of grade C mature second growth dry-mesic, mesic, and dry upland forest. The White Rock site encompasses approximately 47 acres of the Monroe City Hill Prairie INAI site (#0199). The site also contains populations of the state-threatened Missouri coneflower (*Rudbeckia missouriensis*), the state-endangered woolly buckthorn (*Bumelia lanuginosa*), and a state-threatened reptile. The proposed nature preserve was previously registered in 2005 by Columbia Quarry Company as the term-limited Columbia Quarry-White Rock Land and Water Reserve. In December 2010, two southwestern Illinois conservation organizations purchased the site, with funding from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Grand Victoria Foundation, and the State Wildlife Grant program of the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service. The site is now jointly owned by these two groups, Clifftop NFP, and Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.

REPORT
Debbie Newman
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 12:* Mason Co. – Buffer Addition to Sand Prairie Scrub Oak Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) seeks final approval for dedication of 50 acres in two separate tracts (40 acres and 10 acres) as buffer addition to Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve. Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve (INAI # 732) is located approximately eight miles south of Havana in the Mason County Sand Areas Conservation Opportunity Area within the Illinois River Section of the Illinois River and Mississippi River Sand Areas Natural Division. Both proposed nature preserve buffer tracts border the Nature Preserve, contain grade C and grade D dry sand forest with black oak (*Quercus velutina*) and blackjack oak (*Q. marilandica*) and old fields with components of sand prairie such as aromatic sumac (*Rhus aromatic*) and sand love grass (*Eragrostis trichodes*), and have the potential for restoration of higher quality natural communities. Four Species in Greatest Need of Conservation have been observed on the proposed buffer: regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*), which is also state- threatened; northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*); yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*); and field sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*). The proposed buffer addition serves as a necessary adjunct to the Nature Preserve by helping to protect high-quality areas from the effects of nearby row-crop agriculture and by providing additional area for natural community restoration. Dedication of this buffer addition will help implement the IWAP by supporting the following priority action campaigns: Farmland and Prairie, Invasive Species, Forest, and Land and Water Stewardship. Dedication of this buffer addition will increase the number of protected acres at Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve to 1,514.75 acres. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 207th Meeting in February, 2011 (Resolution 2121).

REPORT
Tom Lerczak
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 13:* McHenry Co. – Sweetwater Creek Addition and Buffer Addition to Boone Creek Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication

Robert and Maggie Bailey seek final approval for dedication of approximately 29 acres of land to be known as the Sweetwater Creek addition (24 acres) and buffer (5 acres) to Boone Creek Fen Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve addition and buffer consists of a large, high-quality relict sedge meadow with elements of wet prairie and fen wetland indicator plant species. The proposed addition and buffer is within the Boone Creek Fen and Seep INAI site and is located within a ground-

watershed that has been designated a Class III Special Resource Groundwater by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois Pollution Control Board. The Boone Creek Fen and Seep is a 465-acre INAI site (#1015) representing one of the finest examples of graminoid fen and calcareous seep wetlands within the State. The site is also located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Dedication will also help protect a known population of a state-threatened flower. The sedge meadow wetlands offer an excellent opportunity to further restore the wetland system that occurs on the valley floor along Boone Creek. The relatively intact groundwater system that sustains the Boone Creek Fen and Seep INAI site is a key element to the successful restoration of the entire site. This dedication proposal is consistent with the long-term goal to protect as much of the Boone Creek Fen and Seep INAI site as possible through the formation of a macro-preserve of privately owned lands. If approved, Maggie and Robert Bailey would become the seventh landowner to enroll land into this macro-preserve complex. If approved, the Sweetwater Creek addition and buffer will increase the acreage of legally protected lands to 133.1 acres. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 206th Meeting in September, 2010 (Resolution 2107).

REPORT

John Nelson

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Final Approval for Dedication

Item 14:* Kankakee Co. – Correction in Legal Description in the Registration Document for Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve

The 62.2-acre Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve was registered at the 172nd meeting of the INPC (Resolution 1597) on August 20, 2001. The registration document was recorded in Kankakee County on August 29, 2001. A scrivener's error in the legal description was recently identified. The original 2001 registration document included the legal description obtained from the landowner's deed; however, one line of text was erroneously omitted. The corrected legal description will need to be approved by the Commission, attached to the original registration document, and re-recorded.

REPORT

Randy Heidorn

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval of Corrected Legal
Description

Item 15: Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2012 Defense Proposals

Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) capital appropriation in FY2011 included \$225,000 to fund contractual natural area defense activities needed on properties included in one of the INPC's protection programs. From the FY2008, FY2009 and FY2010 NAAF capital appropriation, \$475,000, \$225,000 and \$225,000 was available respectively to defend natural areas statewide. NAAF defense projects that were begun in years prior to FY2011 and continued or completed during FY2011

include: funding the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) to collect and review groundwater data needed to assess impacts of proposed off-site development, threats or damages, prepare Class 3 Special Resource Groundwater petitions to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for INPC program sites and provide groundwater consulting services for the INPC staff. In FY 2010, there was a new contract for the continuation of the aforementioned groundwater consulting services and Class III delineations from the ISGS, and we are working on details of a way to implement better easement monitoring procedures for existing INPC program sites (\$130,000). Approximately \$230,000 of the four years of appropriation authority remains unassigned to specific projects. This appropriation authority remains available to address threats that may arise provided dollars are available within NAAF. Based on the FY2012 budget proposal, \$75,000 may be available for allocation to defense from this year's appropriation. Specific projects will be selected as needed but will likely include a continuation of the aforementioned groundwater data and consultation services at some level. Specific projects funded during FY2012 will be reported in May, 2012.

REPORT

Randy Heidorn/Jenny Skufca
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval of FY2011 Defense Project
Plan

Item 16: Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2012 Land Acquisition Proposals

The NAAF is administered by the IDNR with review and recommendation of land acquisition projects by the INPC. In FY2010, the IDNR identified 20 high priority tracts of land currently for sale within 16 natural areas. No new land acquisition was completed during FY2010 for FY2011. Depending on the final IDNR budget, tracts from this same approved list will be considered for state acquisition in FY2012 if and when funds become available. All the proposed acquisition parcels are included on the INAI, and/or provide habitat for endangered or threatened species of animals or plants. The proposed acquisitions total 2,800 acres and would cost approximately \$12,600,000 to acquire. The proposed capital budget includes a total of \$1,000,000 for acquisition, preservation and stewardship from NAAF. A final decision on the amount of money, if any, to be used for land acquisition in FY2012 has not yet been made.

REPORT

Don McFall
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Natural Heritage

Item 17: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 18: Other Business

Item 19: Adjournment